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## CONSTRUCTING IDEOLOGY: A CRITICAL LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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This study examines the linguistic structures used for propagating specific ideologies through which discourses of a U.S. newspaper construct ideological representations of political events and situations in South Korea to the readers. Critical linguistic analysis is used to examine the *New York Times* coverage of 'the massive labor strikes' in South Korea. The analysis contributes to the understanding of the ideological role of language within news discourse in constructing representations of the social world. Such research has important implications for teaching awareness of the constructive and functional nature of language in general, and news discourse in particular, in and out of a school setting.

### 0. Introduction

Approaches to critical linguistics have identified several dimensions of relationships among language, ideology, and power. Critical linguistic analysis aims at uncovering the role of language in constructing social identities, relationships, issues, and events. Its central concern has been to examine the socio-political nature of the texts and discourses through which social reality is constituted and investigate how these discourses maintain power through their ideological properties (Fairclough 1989; Fowler 1987).

An increasing number of studies from various disciplines (Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard 1996; Chilton 1982; Curran 1977; van Dijk 1988a, 1988b, 1991, 1993; Fairclough 1989; Fowler 1991; Hall 1985; Hartley 1982; Hartmann et al., 1974; Tuchman 1978) has demonstrated that, due to the nature of news itself, news cannot be a totally value-free reflection of facts. News-producing processes comprise selection, interpretation, and presentation of events to audiences, thereby constructing reality in a manner corresponding to the underlying ideologies of the presenters and their intended audience. Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position. A news report imposes a structure of values on whatever it represents, and so inevitably news reports produce meanings that construct ideological representations of the social world.

Recent studies on media discourse from the perspective of critical discourse analysis (Brookes 1995; Bruck 1989; Clayman 1990; Dunmire 1997; van Leeuwen 1995; Wodak 1991; Wodak & Matouschek 1993) have demonstrated how the Western news media linguistically construct ideological representations of different groups of people and different countries, and how these representations

exercise a great deal of power in shaping our interpretation of the world. But little attention has been paid to U.S. news reports about South Korea. Such an analysis is important for the further understanding of how discourses of U.S. news reports construct ideological representations of socio-political events in South Korea to the readers and how these representations contribute to the shaping of common beliefs and value systems in readers. It is the claim of this study that the ideological representations of a picture of events in South Korea can be discerned by analyzing the *New York Times* coverage of a particular socio-political issue in South Korea called 'the massive labor strikes in South Korea' in terms of critical linguistics.

In this study I will examine the ideological representation of 'the labor strikes in South Korea' through a critical linguistic analysis of the *New York Times* reports. I will argue that news reports by the capitalist news media construct an ideological representation that is pro-government and pro-corporation, which consequently is anti-labor. This representation is achieved through linguistic structures and processes at various levels. It is hoped that studies like this one will create an awareness of the constructive and functional nature of language within news discourse.

### **1. Theoretical and analytical framework**

The theoretical framework of this study comes from the perspectives of critical linguistics (van Dijk 1988a, 1988b, 1993, 1994; Fairclough 1989, 1992; Fowler 1991; Halliday 1985; Halliday & Hasan 1989; Hodge & Kress 1988; Kress 1989; Thompson 1984). Unlike formal linguistics, whose aim is to study only linguistic form without its social function, the aims of critical linguistics are to explore the social function of language, to describe linguistic processes in social terms, and to reveal the 'ideological and political investments' (Fairclough 1992:315). Language study is a means of understanding the manner in which society works (Thompson 1994). Uncovering the social function of language entails interpreting language and meaning within a social context: Language can be explained only as the realization of meanings that are inherent in the social system (Halliday 1985). One aspect of meaning worth studying is what is called 'ideology' or 'the ways in which meaning serves to sustain asymmetrical relations of power' (Thompson 1984:4). 'The workings of ideology' thus can be discerned through linguistic analysis. This concept of ideology is adopted in this paper because it provides a more explicit link to the position of language in society.

Consistent with the above conceptualization, the method of systematic textual analysis adopted in this study to uncover the way in which discourses operate in society comes from the unified discursive framework proposed in Fairclough 1989, 1992. As Fairclough (1989:129) suggests, an ideology of the powerful class is turned into a universal belief through the process of 'naturalization' and the media plays an important role in naturalizing these dominant ideologies. Thus critical language study is a proper approach in language studies to uncover underlying power relationships in the use of language that are normally hidden.

Fairclough 1989 identifies three stages of critical linguistic analysis: first, description of the text; second, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction; third, explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context. The first stage, description of the text, is the level of textual analysis. The second and third stages are the integration of contextual analysis and interpretive analysis. Thus, the method of analysis employed in this study will be the interaction of these three levels of analysis. Even though Fairclough presents the stages of analyses in a linear fashion, the stages of discursive analysis, social analysis, and interpretation and explanation are often simultaneous processes. Therefore, the analysis to be presented in this paper will integrate all three stages. This is done to achieve a unified analysis of how the ideological and political interests underlying accounts of the massive labor strikes in South Korea are linguistically constructed in the *New York Times*.

Simultaneously with the above sociological approach, the socio-cognitive framework is necessary to examine the ideological construction within news discourse. From the socio-cognitive angle, ideologies are conceived as 'basic frameworks that organize social representations in the minds of social group members' (van Dijk 1994:1). Ideology is therefore conceptualized as a mental schema consisting of various categories such as identity/membership, task, goal, norms, positions, all of which define and shape the ideology of a group. In these cognitive structures of ideology and its social manifestation the role of attitudes plays a central part. Attitudes are manifested in discourse via values accorded and contained in linguistic items, and the identity membership that underlies the well known 'us vs. them' categorization is found in many attitudes (van Dijk 1994). Thus, the fact that attitudes form such a central part in the internal structure of ideology emphasizes the intensity of attitudinal orientation and values embedded in news reports and accentuates the need to identify and study them. Following this approach, it can be argued that the *New York Times* reports about the labor strikes in South Korea create the 'fixed attitude' that is coherently shared by relevant group members. It is argued in this paper that the ideology embedded in the *New York Times* coverage of the labor strikes in South Korea ascribes positive and negative values by the 'us vs. them' dichotomy via linguistic choices that create and sustain positive attitudes toward the 'us' category while creating consequent negative attitudes towards the 'them' category. Therefore, the approach of socio-cognitive analysis (van Dijk 1994) is also adopted in this study because it establishes the link between ideology and attitudes. Since the purpose of this study is to examine the inherent ideological attitude embodied in the *New York Times* reports, the cognitive framework is very important along with the detailed discursive framework provided by Fairclough.

The model adopted in this study, in short, synthesizes the external manifestation of ideology in discourse with the internal cognitive effects on the reader of the *New York Times* news reports about the massive labor strikes in South Korea.

## 2. Data

This study is based on the analysis of data from the *New York Times* news coverage of 'the massive labor strikes in South Korea'. The *New York Times* was selected because of its status as a national newspaper in the United States. Four months' (August and September 1994, December 1996, and January 1997) coverage of the relevant events was surveyed. The period of coverage selected covers roughly the peak of the duration of the issue. The data comprise every news item (a total of 29 articles) from the *New York Times*. In collecting data, coverage by outside sources — AP, UP, Reuters News Agency — was excluded. All of the data analyzed in this study are written by the correspondents of the *New York Times*. A critical discourse analysis of the news stories discusses specific textual patterns in the presentation of news to show how they underpin the ideological meanings of text, and shows how specific linguistic structures and styles are employed to construct political interests underlying news accounts and to show the 'us' vs. 'them' dichotomy in operation.

## 3. Critical discourse analysis

### 3.1 Headlines

As the first step in the textual analysis of 'the massive labor strikes in South Korea', the headlines of all articles are analyzed. Headlines show the most prominent and relevant information of the news discourse. Headlines simply abstract the main event of the story and are therefore entirely derivable from the story. Together with the lead, the headline forms the summary of the report, which 'strategically serves as the expression of its macrostructure ... this macrostructure or thematic structure is best recalled by readers' (van Dijk 1988b:226). Functioning as an initial summary, headlines define the situation reported in the press and provide preferred reading and interpretation for news text to readers (see Bell 1991; van Dijk 1988; van Dijk & Kintsch 1983). Since readers often read and recall only headlines and the leads, they construct not only preferred meanings for the news texts for the readers but also the most prominent ideological view of the texts. In order to investigate the most prominent and specific ideological frameworks in news discourse on 'the massive labor strikes in South Korea', therefore, the headlines are examined. The headlines of all articles on the massive labor strikes in South Korea in the *New York Times* of August and September 1987, and December 1996 to January 1997 are given in the Appendix, and are analyzed below.

### Macroproposition

A general ideological picture of 'the massive labor strikes in South Korea' is shown by the topic analysis of news items (Hartmann et al. 1974; van Dijk 1988a). Unlike the subject denoted by a single concept (e.g., the massive labor strikes in South Korea), topics are propositions contained in a subject. Topics are 'routinely expressed in the ideal headline of a single news report' (van Dijk 1988a:170), and therefore, are the most important information expressed by a text. For instance, under the subject of the massive labor strikes, both headlines *Strikes*



*mounting in South Korea and Thousands gather in Seoul to mark democratic gain* are topics.

The topics, however, should be accounted for at an overall, more global level than the microlevel of words, sentences, and sentence connections; they should be identified at the level of 'semantic macrostructure' which makes explicit the overall topics. Thus, macropropositions are derived by macrorules of generalization, selection, and construction that semantically map proposition sequences to a macroproposition at a higher level. Because semantic macropropositions describe the gist of the news reports, the analysis of macropropositions is crucial for understanding the properties of headlines. Therefore, in order to show the most prominent meanings of the news texts, the macropropositions or topics of all 29 headlines are analyzed. Table 1 shows the macropropositions of the headlines of the *New York Times* for 'the massive labor strikes in South Korea'. The analysis of macropropositions of the headlines reveals the following scripts and situation models (van Dijk 1988b) associated with the reports of the massive labor strikes in South Korea.

**Table 1**

Macropropositions of headlines in the *New York Times* coverage of the massive labor strikes in South Korea. August and September of 1987, December 1996 to January 1997.

Macropropositions	Total Number
Striking workers are violent and uncontrollable	7
Labor strikes cause national economic loss	4
Labor strikes cause social unrest	4
Government backs democratic process	3
Workers are motivated by self-interest	2
Management is cooperative	2
Strikes are controlled by leftist students	1
Workers are not justified	1
Koreans (both government and strikers) cannot negotiate	1
Labor strikes are a labor-management dispute	1
South Korean government and strikers are not democratic	1

According to the *New York Times* reports, the labor strikes in South Korea are a labor-management dispute, not a political issue related to labor law and the freedom of labor activities. The labor strikes cause huge economic losses, which result in national losses because the companies involved in labor strikes represent the economic development of the nation. The labor strikes also cause social unrest. The striking workers are violent, uncontrollable, and motivated by self-interest (higher wages). They are controlled by leftist students and dissident groups, and consequently run counter to democracy, thus their action cannot be justified. As a counterpart of workers in the conflicts, corporate management shows an effort to resolve the problem. Neither the South Korean government nor the workers are able to negotiate because of a lack of democratic tradition.

However, the South Korean government is attempting to be democratic as a mediator trying to solve the labor-management dispute in a democratic way and is credited for that role.

### Lexicalization

The choice of words is important in providing readers with cues for interpreting events. It can define how we perceive the actions and the intentions of the participants in events, and thereby convey the message that the producer of the text intended readers to receive. Lexical items construct particular ideological representations of experiences or events. Apart from this experiential function, vocabulary has expressive value implying the producer's negative or positive evaluation of actions, participants, and events. Therefore, the structure of vocabulary can be regarded as ideologically based. The selection of word-meanings through lexicalization is one of the major dimensions of news discourse fashioned by ideologies.

Where an unusually high degree of wording, often involving clusters of related terms that are near synonyms, occurs, this overwording or overlexicalization often indicates a key concept or particular preoccupation that gives certain meanings the producer of texts intends to convey (Fairclough 1989; Fowler 1991). Overwording around the concept of violence, through the repetition of words such as 'strikes mounting', 'violence', 'pressing', 'protest', 'crisis', 'unrest', 'grip', and 'clashes' and the use of interrelated terms such as 'killed', 'death', 'paralyze', 'exports off', point to an area of intense preoccupation with violence and social unrest caused by labor strikes in South Korea: *Koreans warned on labor violence* (6 September), *Worker is killed in South Korea protest* (23 August), *Clashes in Seoul as strike widens its grip* (29 December), *350,000 on strike in South Korea as unrest spreads* (28 December): *Workers pressing for higher wages* (12 August).

By taxonomic organization of vocabulary, lexical structure also has a categorizing function, sorting concepts into strictly defined categorial relationships between classes of concepts. The vocabulary dichotomizes social processes into two groups, 'democratic' on the one hand and 'anti-democratic' on the other. The sort of structural opposition of words such as 'violence', 'threaten', 'paralyze' on the one hand, 'democratic gain', 'democratic process', 'democratic give and take' on the other has an effect of the reproduction of ideology: Labor strikes are violent and threatening, therefore go against the times of democracy: *Koreans warned on labor violence* (6 September), *Strikers threaten to paralyze Seoul* (30 December), *Government backs union: crisis tests commitment to democratic process* (18 August), *South Korea's...Kim and strikers unschooled in democratic give and take* (30 December).

The reformulation of events through the relexicalization of terms has interesting ideological effects. These include the naturalized reformulation of 'Hyundai' as 'Korean Symbol' which gives an impression that the Hyundai company represents South Korean industry, thus labor strikes cause heavy national

losses: *Hyundai Korean symbol* (20 August), and *Koreans warned on labor violence*; *Car exports off sharply* (6 September).

The choice of verbs has established expressive value. Verbs are used to either endorse or invalidate the participants. The concrete processes 'seize', 'threaten' are used to signal the actions of workers: *Workers seize Hyundai plants in South Korea* (18 August), *Strikers threaten to paralyze Seoul* (30 December). The negative evaluation of the writers is implicit in these verbs. On the contrary, the material or verbal processes 'backs', 'agrees', 'mollify', and 'yields' are used to signal actions or statements of the South Korean government and company: *Government backs union: Crisis tests commitment to democratic process* (18 August), *South Korean company agrees to recognize union* (20 August), *To mollify labor groups, South Korean leader yields a bit* (22 January), where these verbs give relatively positive evaluation.

### Participants and processes

The analysis of participants and processes has to do with the ways in which choices between different grammatical processes and participant types are made to be ideologically significant. The particular selections are from the system of transitivity. Transitivity refers to how meaning is represented in the clause by how text producers encode in language their mental picture of reality. Halliday 1985 explains transitivity in terms of processes: 'Our most powerful conception of reality is that it consists of "goings-on". These goings-on are sorted out in the semantic system of the language and expressed through the grammar of the clause' (101). Two main components of the semantic processes expressed by clauses are the verbal process itself and participants involved in the process. Selection between process types has an effect of highlighting or backgrounding agency, and such choices are ideological because the motivated obfuscation of agency results in leaving attributions of causality and responsibility unclear.

The South Korean government and companies are constructed as agents/doers in the *New York Times*. This is achieved grammatically by placing them as participants functioning as actors or speakers of material and verbal processes: *Seoul, in switch, moves to resolve a labor dispute* (19 August), *South Korean company agrees to recognize union* (20 August), *Seoul seeks calm after worker's death* (24 August); or as classifiers within the nominalized processes: *Hyundai Korean symbol* (20 August), where readers draw upon the socio-cognitive representation to interpret the roles of the government and company which represent the state economy: They are agents and actors endeavoring to resolve the disputes in a democratic way and taking a firm stand against violence caused by workers. In this way, the South Korean government and companies are represented as agent/actor and workers as patient/receiver.

Workers are grammatically put both as agents, i.e., as actors, speakers and as affected participants, i.e., in the sense of being 'done to' and as receivers of verbal processes.

Workers are grammatically structured as actors and direct agents of processes such as violence: *Workers seize Hyundai plants in South Korea* (18

August), *Shipyard strike nears end in Korea: Workers, who mourn the death of a laborer, must accept a pact* (27 August), *Strikers threaten to paralyze Seoul* (30 December), or as classifiers in the nominal group where processes have been nominalized: *Workers pressing for higher wages* (12 August), *Kim and strikers unschooled in democratic give and take* (30 December), *South Korean workers to limit their strike to once a week* (19 January), *350,000 on strike in South Korea as unrest spreads* (28 December), where strikers are represented as motivated by self-interest and not being able to behave in a democratic way. In the last example, the rhetoric of numbers is used to achieve credibility with the reader. This has an effect of stressing the preciseness and truthfulness of the text.

When describing processes of negotiation and talks, the agency of worker participants is backgrounded by attenuation or omission. The effect of attenuation is prominent where the relational verb is omitted and the circumstantial elements, which are normally grammatically subordinate in status to the process, are included: *Talks on draft constitution intensifying in Seoul* (25 August).

Workers also appear as affected participants, i.e., being 'done to'. Through the use of middle clauses where causality and agency is backgrounded or omitted, workers are construed as agent and affected participant at the same time: *Workers, who mourn the death of a laborer, must accept a pact* (27 August). As affected participants, workers are put in the subject position in a passive construction where agency is omitted and, instead, the circumstantial element is included: *Worker is killed in South Korea protest* (23 August), where the death of the worker appears to be engendered by the workers' protest, attributing responsibility to them. Workers are receivers of verbal processes by the government: *South Korean strikes expand as president delivers appeal to labor unions* (7 January).

For the question about what important part of the message the grammatical construction constitutes for the participants, and what ideological and social meanings result, the above analysis suggests that the role of the South Korean government and corporations is primarily a positive one. The South Korean government and corporations participate predominantly as actors involving actions and decisions regarding the labor dispute and the behavior of workers. They are represented as protecting democracy from the violent strikers who cause social unrest and national losses. The role of workers, on the other hand, suggests they are passive participants in the labor disputes; they are misled by the left, motivated by self-interest, and, consequently, cause national economic losses. They are represented as actors involved in actions of violence, causing unrest in South Korean society. Therefore, the representations of participants are dichotomized according to the capitalist relations: the government and capitalist corporations are in 'our' positive self-representation and workers in 'their' negative representation.

### **Thematization**

The theme is what a text is about and, apart from the focus of the clause, the most important information in the clause. It appears in the first part of the clause.



The analysis of the thematic patterns of the headlines not only reveals what information the writer considers would catch the eye, but also gives insight into common assumptions taken for granted about social reality.

The thematic patterns in the headlines are oriented either to participants: *Workers seize Hyundai plants in South Korea* (18 August), or to processes in the reduced form of nominalization: *Clashes in Seoul as strike widens its grip* (29 December).

Workers and leftist students occupy the highest proportion of thematic positions (59%, that is, 17 among 29). They are predominantly presented in relation to processes of clashes and violence, or they are thematized as passive participants, though less often. The South Korean government and police are the next-most thematized participants (21%, 6 among 29). References to the South Korean government are in relation to its role of mediator and its commitment to the democratic process, and references to police are in relation to control. Corporate management occupies a relatively small proportion of thematic positions (7%, 2 among 29). However, it is thematized as the symbol of economic development in South Korea and in relation to its effort to solve the labor disputes.

The consistent thematic positioning of workers, the number of workers involved in strikes, and nominalizations involving clashes and violence foreground the violent nature of strikes. These thematic foregroundings of workers evoke in the mind of readers the common assumptions and beliefs about labor strikes' resulting in social unrest and national losses, and negative impressions about striking workers. On the contrary, the frequent foregrounding of the South Korean government in thematic position in relation to processes involving legitimate mediation and democratic problem-solving, and thematization of corporate management suggest a preoccupation with their positive roles in contrast to the violence of strikes as a direct threat to the nation. The themes thereby contribute to the naturalization of the workers' role as violent strikers causing national losses, the government as a mediator and guardian of democracy, and corporations as the motivating force for national development. This naturalization is achieved through linguistic transformations because it is the most effective way of drawing the picture of social reality — pro-government and pro-corporation/anti-labor — in the mind of readers.

### 3.2 The news texts

The following are the discourse analyses of the *New York Times* reports about the massive labor strikes in South Korea to show how specific textural structures in the news texts are used to generate particular ideological meanings, and to interpret the textual pattern at the socio-political level. This part of textual analysis focuses on two significant features: the representations of participants and processes, and quotations.

#### Participants and processes

I have already shown that an analysis of participants and processes through a transitivity system expresses certain meanings by foregrounding and others by

backgrounding through linguistic structures. Analysis reveals similar representations of the roles of participants in the headlines. The representations of the participants' roles and processes are not, however, so prominent as in the headlines, particularly in the news texts of the labor strikes in December 1996 and January 1997. The massive labor strikes in December 1996 were set off by the new labor laws that made it easier for companies to lay off workers and delayed for three years the authorization of labor unions. The strikes differed from the previous labor unrest represented in the news; the news reports made them appear to be more about making gains in wages and working conditions. Therefore, while maintaining the positive representations of the government and corporate management and downgrading workers as revealed in the headlines, the news texts seem to moderate the dichotomous representations.

The negative representations of workers involved in labor strikes are achieved at the level of global schematic structure by the strategic positioning, descriptions, background information, explanation, and evaluation, as well as the negative lexical choices for a participant's action. For examples, workers are foregrounded not only through occupying thematic position at the level of the clause but by appearing in the lead paragraph (in 18 among 29 issues). Along with the headlines, the lead is a summary and focusing act with the headlines. Thus, the lead foregrounds the roles of workers that the text producer regards as most relevant. All references to workers in the leads are in relation to processes involving social unrest, violence, clashes, demands for higher wages, and death of the worker killed in protest. This systemic foregrounding in the lead positions them as central players in labor disputes centered around violence. The negative representations of workers are also achieved through the rhetoric of juxtaposition so that positive actions or intentions to form unions freely by workers are put side by side with the descriptions of violence and social unrest. Therefore, positive pictures of workers are apparently downgraded.

The positive representations of the South Korean government and corporations are also achieved at the level of global schematic structure by the strategic positioning, descriptions, as well as positive lexical choices for a participant's action. For example, the South Korean government and corporations are foregrounded not only by occupying the thematic position at the level of the clause, but by appearing in the lead paragraph (10 and 2, each) and by the evaluation of events at the key points in the text. Their statements are credited as evaluating and confirming events. And the rhetoric of violence defines workers negatively as in '...wide spread labor unrest helped to persuade the military to step in' (12 August), but makes a positive representation of South Korean government and corporations in 'Waiting patiently', 'the government had acted so far with admirable restraint' (12 August). While passing the new labor law unfavorable to workers and sticking to the anti-union policy, the South Korean government is credited for economic development and changing policies.

The representations of the participants' roles and processes by transitivity structures of the sentence are not, however, so prominent as in the headlines. Headlines are initial summaries of news texts and therefore foreground what the

producer considers relevant. Headlines construct therefore the most prominent ideological view of the texts as well as preferred meanings for the news texts. In contrast, the news texts are guided by 'the journalistic news value of objectivity' (Brooks 1995:482) and consequently the total downgrading of workers is not appropriate.

### Quotations

An analysis of quotations (direct and indirect) in the news texts shows that South Korean government officials, business leaders, and a western diplomat are represented as important and reliable. In terms of dichotomous source usage, a wider variety of participants are quoted as sources and evaluate events: official estimates, the Korean Labor Minister, anonymous analysts, business leaders, spokespersons, a western diplomat, and western businessmen. Workers, labor leaders, international labor groups, and opposition party leaders are merely statement-makers.

There is some difference in the number of quotations (direct and indirect) between participants for the government and corporations on the one hand, workers and labor leaders on the other. While participants for the government and corporations appear as news sources, explain and evaluate events 97 times in whole issues, workers and labor representatives are quoted 41 times and 37 times, respectively. Table 2 shows the number of quotations for each side. The number of quotations are divided into two groups, pro-government and corporation vs. pro-workers.

Table 2 shows that the South Korean government and corporations are quoted more than workers and labor leaders, even though the difference is not marked. The difference, however, is in how the two sets of participants are quoted.

**Table 2**

Number of quotations in the New York Times coverage of the massive labor strikes in South Korea.

Quotations	Pro-government/corporation	Pro-workers
Direct	31	33
Indirect	66	45
Total	97	78

A wider variety of participants on the side of the government and corporations appear to explain and evaluate events, and their statements are quoted by frequently using verbal processes such as 'confirmed', 'predicted', 'reiterated', 'have expressed', 'says', 'said', and 'denounced'. The government and corporation participants are usually quoted at length, without verification and without it being indicated as necessary. The statements of workers and labor leaders are not quoted in this way. Workers or labor leaders often have their statements discredited. This is achieved by repeatedly using verbal processes such as 'threaten' and

'insist'. However, the more neutral words, 'say' and 'said' are often used for workers and labor leaders.

The statements of workers are used to discredit the actions of other workers, e.g., in the text of 29 August following the headline *Koreans fail to make martyr of worker*, a family member of a worker killed in a clash with the police is described as discrediting the workers' action: 'Mr. Lee's uncle, who had led the family's fight for a private burial, had nothing but bitter words for the way workers handled the funeral. "It's definitely against the moral tradition of the people and the nation," he said, "It's definitely against humanism,"' which appears at the end of the news texts and consequently has an effect of totally discrediting the actions of workers. Another example is in the news texts of 17 January, 1997, following the headline *Thriving, South Koreans strike to keep it that way*, where several workers are quoted to discredit labor unions: "'Now I dislike the labor union. During the strikes, I lost a lot of money... It (labor law issue) has nothing to do with us," he insisted.' The statements of workers are also discredited by the following information in the news texts, which undermines the workers' statements, e.g., in the news texts of 29 December, 1996, following the headline *Clashes in Seoul as strike widens its grip*, a worker's voice is undermined by the following information and the statements of a government official:

'This strike will go on indefinitely,' Park Moon Jin, a leader of the Democratic Federation, said today, pausing on a Seoul street corner after giving a speech to workers. She had been roundly applauded when she shouted into a bullhorn, 'We should smash down the Kim Young Sam regime at once!'

Not all the members of the union alliances are on strike, and there are huge variations in estimates of the number of workers taking part. Chung Ji Won, a Labor Ministry official, said today that about 120,000 were striking and that the number was declining.

Another example is in the news text of 30 December, 1996, following the headline *South Korea's immovable objects*, where the statements of a worker who complains about the government's undemocratic repression are negatively evaluated by the reporter:

... said Cho Chul, 36, a hotel cook who carried a banner at a labor rally today. 'There's physical oppression, as there was before, and now in addition there's legal and economic repression as well. So it is tougher than before.'

Such assertions seem vastly overstated. There is far more democracy now than there was under the dictators, and the best evidence for that is that people like Mr. Cho cheerfully give their names to a reporter.

This is the most frequent form of discrediting workers in the *New York Times*. Workers are also discredited by quoting previous statements and actions that contradict their present statements and actions, e.g., in the text of 8 January, 1997, following the headline *South Korea labor leader manages strike and awaits ar-*



rest, the labor leader Kwon Young Kil who coordinated the largest work stoppage is reported as saying 'At a rally on Monday, Mr. Kwon screamed invectives against President Kim and worked the anger of the crowd with his sharp rhetoric. But in an interview today he was soft-spoken and affable, hardly the image of a radical.'

Statements of workers and labor leaders include unreasonable, violent, and emotional expressions: 'She had been roundly applauded when she shouted into a bullhorn, "we should smash down the Kim Young Sam regime at once!"' (29 December, 1996); 'Striking South Korean workers threatened to paralyze Seoul', 'overthrow the Kim Young Sam government!', 'she added that it was acceptable for the opposition to use undemocratic steps because the governing party had gained a majority only by manipulating' (30 December, 1996). These statements are often quoted in the reports of violent strikes and agitation by workers.

The leaders of the opposition party are less prominent, but usually are quoted as credible sources. While they are usually dissatisfied with the government, they sometimes give a positive evaluation of the government and events. When they became too extreme against the government, their statements are sometimes undermined by information on their previous actions in the news texts, e.g., in the news text of 22 January, 1997, following the headline *To mollify labor groups, South Korean leader yields a bit*, the statement of the leader of an opposition party is discredited by information on previous actions of opposition leaders that contradict the current ones:

But a spokesman for the second largest opposition party, whose leader, Kim Jong Phil, also attended the meeting, said there was still a 'huge gap between the ruling and opposition parties' and that the President 'was not sincere at all.' ... Opposition parties have also been somewhat cautious. During much of the strike the parties declined to clearly state their opinions on the new labor law, waiting to see which way the wind was blowing and happy to see President Kim stew in his juice. Only recently, as public opinion became clearer, did opposition leaders step up their campaign against the labor law and seek to strengthen ties with labor leaders.

The major function of statements of various participants on the side of the government and corporation is not only to describe and give information, but also to confirm and evaluate events in terms of the losses of companies and the whole South Korean economy caused by strikes, e.g., in the news text of 12 August, 1987, following the headline *Strikes mounting in South Korea*, South Korea's Labor Minister is quoted warning strikers of the economic losses: 'Korea's Labor Minister, Lee Hun Ki, warned today that the Government might move in if the unrest did not subside, and he estimated that the disputes had already cost \$125 million in lost production opportunities and \$55 million in exports,' where the statement is represented as a fact without verification and consequently gets credit for judging strikers. Following this, business leaders are quoted in the same text to show their concern about national losses: 'Business leaders have expressed con-

cern that plant shutdowns and late deliveries could hurt not only their own companies, but also South Korea's image as a powerful exporter.' The statements of the government officials are quoted to justify their actions against strikers and to define strikes as inter-organizational conflicts, e.g., in the news text of 20 August, 1987, following the headline *South Korean company agrees to recognize union*, the Deputy Labor Minister is quoted as saying 'Mr. Han told reporters this afternoon that Hyundai's labor dispute was an internal affair ... but when social disorder occurs, the Government will step in and mediate fairly.' These statements are not re-interpreted by the news report. Therefore, there is no clear boundary between the voice of the news reports and spokespersons of the government and corporation.

The statements of participants on the side of the South Korean government are often quoted at the end of a news text as credible and overall evaluation (in 7 issues), e.g., in the news text of 12 August, 1987, following the headline *Strikes mounting in South Korea*, a western businessman is quoted as saying 'Businesses are not really hurt if things are settled in a short time, because they have enough excess capacity and inventory to make it up', he said. 'In the long run, company expenses will go up, but that's the price you pay for democracy.' Another example is in the news text of 30 December, 1996, following the headline *South Korea's immovable objects*, where a government official is quoted as saying 'This government is fully committed to reform,' the official said. 'But sometimes you find that reform is more difficult than revolution.' Their statements give an overall evaluation of the events: while striking workers cause national losses, the government is doing its best to resolve the issues because that is the cost for democracy. These evaluations are not re-interpreted by the news reports, consequently they are transformed into seemingly objective accounts that merely reflect social reality.

#### 4. Conclusion

The models of critical linguistics combine an analysis of the socio-political contexts with an analysis of the coverage of news events in order to deduce the ideological framework of news media. An examination of the *New York Times* news reports on a socio-political issue, called 'the massive labor strikes in South Korea', demonstrates how the political and ideological interests underlying the newspaper reports are naturalized through linguistic constructions as presupposed sensible accounts of social reality. An analysis of the news reports on the labor strikes in South Korea by capitalist mass media manifests capitalist ideologies that are pro-government and pro-corporation, and reveals the 'us vs. them' news framework in representing the events. The news reports transform the capitalists' interests into presupposed national interests, marginalizing the rights of workers, class conflict into cultural pluralistic consensus, and power into neutral authority. The government and corporate management belong to an 'us' sphere and workers are put in the 'them' sphere.

The *New York Times* pays attention to the interests of corporate management and foregrounds the government's role as a neutral authority struggling to

create democracy and having the capacity to solve the issue within the existing system, and minimizes the history of violent repression of labor. The rights and demands of workers are undermined, the nature of strikes are routinized as a labor-management dispute, their political perspectives are minimized even when the strikes are against the government's new labor law, and the violent nature of strikes is highlighted. Although they are the largest group in society, Korean workers have never had any political representation. Workers have human needs and wants beyond higher wages and agreeable working conditions. They need an institutional forum to articulate and press for their human, not just worker, interests. Better wages and limited unionization, therefore, will not provide an enduring solution to the labor unrest. These complex sets of political reasons are totally ignored in the *New York Times* coverage.

Cultural translation of the labor strikes are ideologically important. By attributing the labor strikes in South Korea to 'the old-fashioned management' style and against cultural traditions such as Confucian morality, the news stories minimize the political significance of the underlying issues.

At the textual level, linguistic analysis of participant roles and processes in transitivity structure, thematic patterns, macroproposition, lexicalization, and rhetorical devices reveals a transformation of ideological and political interests into social reality. The news discourse in the *New York Times* is seemingly guided by the journalistic canon of objectivity, balance, and neutrality, while seeming rhetorical linguistic structures mask its persuasive rhetorical function constructing representations of events.

The *New York Times* reports of the massive labor strikes in South Korea show that there is not a wide range of views that news media make us believe, but views within narrow ideological frames through which the reality of everyday social life is constituted (Hall et al., 1978; Kress 1996).

## 5. Implications

This study is a contribution to the area of critical sociolinguistic research in that the theoretical and methodological framework I have adopted reveals the role of language in the news reports in sustaining relations of power. Thus, it belongs in the category of critical language study: a language study that 'places a broad conception of the social study of language at the core of language study' (Fairclough 1989:13).

This study links ideology and social practice. In her recent book, Hasan (1996:113) argues that 'ideologies live through the common everyday actions — both verbal and non-verbal — of a host of social actors who are far from thinking consciously about it'. Considering that reading newspapers is a fixed automatic part of our daily routine, the pervasive role of ideology is most evident in the newspaper that this study deals with.

Another implication of this study is that, as Fairclough (1989:235) points out, 'critique of the media has hardly ever been attempted due to the lack of a general access to modes of analysis.' This study attempts to make it possible for

the marginalized parties to assume the right to reply to those represented in the newspapers.

This study has implications for teaching language awareness to adults as well as students in and out of a school setting, and opens new directions of research that would devise strategies and methods of achieving critical language awareness. Newspaper readers cannot easily read through a newspaper disinterestedly, and be aware of what is biased. What we really need is an educational program in critical reading within which critical linguistics would be a new methodological input.

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## APPENDIX

*The New York Times* headlines of 'the massive labor strikes in South Korea'  
August and September 1987, December 1996 to January 1997.

1. Strikes mounting in South Korea; Workers pressing for higher wages: Together with the right to form unions (12 August)
2. Thousands gather in Seoul to mark democratic gain (16 August)
3. Workers seize Hyundai plants in South Korea; 40,000 return to work: Government backs union -- Crisis tests commitment to democratic process (18 August)
4. Seoul, in switch, moves to resolve a labor dispute (19 August)
5. Hyundai Korean symbol (20 August)
6. South Korean company agrees to recognize union (20 August)
7. Worker is killed in South Korea protest (23 August)
8. Seoul seeks calm after worker's death (24 August)
9. Talks on draft constitution intensifying in Seoul (25 August)
10. 6 South Korean students held on political charges (26 August)
11. Shipyard strike nears end in Korea: workers, who mourn the death of a laborer, must accept a pact (27 August)
12. Koreans fail to make martyr of worker (29 August)
13. In Seoul, colleges are open and students protests begin (2 September)
14. 20,000 workers in South Korea resume strike against Hyundai (2 September)
15. South Korean police seize 200 strikers (5 September)
16. Koreans warned on labor violence: car exports off sharply (6 September)
17. 350,000 on strike in South Korea as unrest spreads (28 December)
18. Clashes in Seoul as strikes widens its grip (29 December)
19. South Korea's immovable objects: Kim and strikers unschooled in democratic give and take (30 December)
20. Strikers threaten to paralyze Seoul (30 December)
21. In South Korea, the strikers take a break for New Year's (31 December)
22. South Korean strikes expand as president delivers appeal to labor unions (7 January)
23. South Korea labor leader manages strike and awaits arrest (8 January)
24. In battle over strikes, South Korean police search union offices (10 January)
25. Thriving, South Koreans strike to keep it that way (17 January)
26. Thriving, yet insecure, South Koreans strike to hold onto their gains (17 January)
27. South Korean workers to limit their strike to once a week (19 January)
28. To mollify labor groups, South Korean leader yields a bit (22 January)
29. Seoul leader fails to halt labor strife (23 January)

